I assisted Phil Kimmelman in publishing a book of caricatures he drew during his time in the animation business.. To answer a couple questions, Phil put me in touch with his old friend and contemporary Shirley Creazzo. Over the next couple months I received numerous detailed emails from Shirley before she passed away. I present those emails here, edited into a narrative as best I was able, and illustrated by Phil Kimmelman.

Shirley Creazzo

SHIRLEY CREAZZO IN HER OWN WORDS

Tony Creazzo

My husband Tony and I met when we both worked for Famous Studios, the NY animation unit of Paramount Pictures: makers of Popeye, Casper the Friendly Ghost, Herman and Katnip, Baby Huey, and the "Bouncing Ball Melodies", among others. Famous was located in two buildings on 45th Steet near 5th Ave – connected at the rear by a metal 'bridge'. Tony was fifteen years older than I, and about ten inches taller. He had been fired for union activity by Terrytoons around 1945, along with Johnny Gent and Gordon Whittier, though he denied guilt. They all went to Famous.

I started at as an inker at Famous Studios on Feb. 7, 1953. Nellie Sanborn Greene supervised the department. Thinking of Nellie reminded me of jobs a few females had at Famous apart from inking and opaquing. Of course there was Edith Vernick doing animatics. I seem to recall she had been in the military in WWll. Ruth Platt headed the Inbetweeening Department, and Ida Gottfurcht animated the bouncing balls from the bar- sheets. – and Gloria Fox doing whatever she did. I don't remember who headed Opaquing, but I feel sure it was a female. And there were others in opaque who had special designations like the one[s] just doing effects …. like billowing smoke or water, or splats and crashes. And I think there was some other category. Maybe color specialists?? Famous was large enough to do things factory style – smaller studios did not have this multitude of designations.

Ruth Platt

I didn't know many women from the Opaquing Department. That is understandable, since they were in the other building, and we [I] saw little of them. I really only knew of Carole Wirth – later Carole Brooks, but that is because I had gone to school with her. I also have trouble

remembering my fellow inkers at Famous, because after I left for Culhane's I saw nothing of them. I'm guessing not many were on the freelancing "tour". In the Ink Department there were two pre-planners at tables as I recall. Also Gloria Fox who sat next to me– but I am not sure what her job was. She was not inking at that time. A door from the back of the inkers room led to the background department holding John Zago and Bob Little. My grandfather– a Broadway scenic artist, knew Bob Little when he was in the Scenic Artists local of IATSE back before he and his brother left for California in the 30s, maybe.

John Zago

Bob Little

Soon I was told I would be attending my first union meeting. It was held at the Luxor Baths in midtown and I was a bit surprised to find there were old men walking the halls wearing nothing but Turkish towels. Someone explained we would be voting for Business Agent of our local that night – Local 841, Screen Cartoonists, a sub- group of IATSE – the International Alliance of Theater and Stage Employees. The current Business Agent was Pepe Ruiz, a Cuban, who, when he spoke of the animators in California, called them "de guys on de cost." I did not know the voting was just a formality (we never did have a different agent for our local) and I did not yet know Tony, but later realized he was one of a group of young guys at the back of the room, all of whom voted for Elvis Presley for Business Agent.

Peppy Ruiz

I should explain here that animators spend a good deal of their work-day drawing cartoons of each other, and of things going on around them which catch their attention. I was 17 years old when I started at Famous, still in Art School in Manhattan, and a bit astonished at the goings on. I recall one room having a hand-drawn poster on the door at Christmas-time showing Santa being guillotined, run through a meat grinder, run over by the reindeer, etc., etc. This was Johnny Gentilella & crew.

Johnny Gent had a brother Matty – in the camera departmentt at Famous – and also a sister named Terry Figueroa in opaquing. Two sad events were the death of Matty and the time Terry was notified years after the end of WWll to go to the docks and claim the return of her husband. Johnny was a pleasant guy. Only ever heard him complain when his wife wanted to spend something like $500 on Christmas presents. And it was his room at Famous that had the hand-drawn Cartoons on the door at Christmas with Santa being made to disappear – permanently!

John Gentilella

The animators at Famous were divided into teams, each team in their own room. Tony's "Popeye" team consisted of ex-Disney man Al Eugster as head animator, and Gordon Whittier, who had a hare lip and severe speech impediment, which did not stop him

from being the big talker in the group (I still have a cartoon Gordon drew of himself at his animation board saying, “blah, blah, blah,” while Tony has fallen asleep on the floor at his feet).

It truly was a vital – and vibrant – industry in its day. And it attracted the most amazing cast of characters. Larry Riley was carried from the studio one day, straight to Bellevue Hospital’s Psychiatric Ward with a case of the DTs, the bottle of scotch in his desk drawer a contributing factor. Larry stopped drinking for a short while. (My father would have said he had the “livin’ bejazus” scared out of him.)

When we were planning our wedding Tony drew a cartoon of the two of us in our wedding garb. Thing is, he drew the groom as a taller version of Cary Grant – and the bride as an adorable version of … well, Minnie Mouse in a veil. Then he left for lunch. (Even then he was veteran enough to have known better.) When Tony returned his drawing was gone from his drawing board, and in its place was a cartoon showing the bride looking like Betty Grable at her very best, and the groom looking like King Kong in a tuxedo.

Famous Studios Inkers
Rose Madaffari &
Ann Menachino

Some months after I started working at Famous Studio we began to hear there was work available at some of the small studios opening up in various places to turn out animated commercials for television. I – and some others – took all the jobs we could get – despite being a bit afraid to leave our jobs at Famous. We ran from the studio on 45th Street at the end of the workday to freelance every night. This was a time when commercials were not done in color – just 12 numbered shades of gray! But the inking work was the same. Black ink and crow quill pens that made a hairline, the non-working ends of the pens carved wide with an x-acto blade, to be used for scratching back mistakes on cels. The hourly rate seemed very good. Overtime work – after midnight or on weekends – earned even more. But, perhaps more important was that we got plenty of practice. Eventually we even had jobs we could do at home.

Helpfully, there was a carpenter at Famous who would build a sturdy wooden portable animation desk, replete with glass rotation disk, peg bars, under-light, and attached gooseneck lamp for $10. !! (Some years later after Tony and I were married and had two of these portables in our apartment, a new young guy in the industry named Al Chiarito, who was working with Tony, said he would simonize our new Buick in our parking lot at our apartment in Bayside, on Long Island … in exchange for one of the portable animation boards. (We made the deal.)

There were about a dozen studios keeping busy at that time – most in locations around midtown. One place I found work rather consistently was at Al Stahl's Animated Productions up on Broadway. There was also lots of work from Bill Sturm also over on Broadway. (I still blush to think of the time I carried home a big job from there to do over the weekend. I was still rather new to inking. It was for a new product: Birdseye frozen vegetables. Kids riding bicycles – lots of wheels! and spokes. Think I crucified that job …. but either no one complained, or I have blocked it from my memory. I am embarrassed just thinking about it now.)

Among the other studios was Tempo and then Academy, Neil and Marge Sessa's Ink & Painting service in the diamond district, Lars Calonius, and there was Bunny Rabbit operating out of a hotel, I think in the 50s and a studio run by one of the twins: I think their names were something like Theron & Thurlo. That studio was also in the 40s. I had worked with Theron at Culhane's and felt so sorry when he was laid off that I never refused him when he needed help. Later UPA came along. You never knew who you might run into working those nights. Because we freelancers worked nights we rarely got to meet the daytime staff, but what with union meetings, and freelancing, and all the studio hirings, it is easy to see why we all seemed to know each other. It was a very busy – but happy and rewarding time. I would do it all again!.

Animated Productions was over on Broadway. I never did see that studio in the daytime, so have no idea what went on before dark, but at night there was no one there but Al Stahl – and whoever else would be doing some inking that night. My impression was that Al and any staff worked on commercials in the daytime but nights with freelancers were focused on his ongoing project of a feature length big screen cartoon about space travel. There were almost always two or three other freelancers joining us. I don't know if that film ever got produced – or even finished – but it kept a lot of us happy for a while. I hope Al was happy with it too – he was unfailingly pleasant and a delight to work for.

Like the other guys his age in the business Al had been drafted into the Army in WWll. Seems at the beginning of the war the Army was unsure what job category the animation guys belonged in and finally settled on "Communications" …. which Al claimed had the guys climbing up and down telephone poles in boot camp. Al swore there came a time when he managed to climb up a pole but refused to come down …. so they gave him a Section Eight and his army career was over.

Al was an easy boss. If while inking a cel you came upon a drawing that did not look right – like perhaps the eyes were wrong – Al would say "could you just fix them as you go along, please?" Another happy thing was that he paid – in cash! every night before you left.

One night it was only Howard Smith and I from Famous, and Al, in the studio. At quitting time they invited me to go with them to grab a bite to eat. Thing is, it was at a bar and it seemed the

guys were both on a liquid diet. Now, I was a rather prissy 18 year old, and had to confess I'd never ordered anything in a bar and did not know the names of any drinks. My dad drank beer but I never did, not liking the taste of it. So the guys said not to worry and ordered me some gin drink which seemed to have no effect at all until I tried to get off the bar stool to go to the ladies room. Seems someone tilted the floor.

So when the guys were more than adequately watered we decided we should all head for our homes. Me to Jamaica by subway, and then Flushing by bus. Howard to Brooklyn, and Al, I am guessing, to somewhere in Manhattan. The next night Al informed me that the night before he was standing at a corner waiting to cross the street when a bus pulled up and opened its door, so he got on … and went who knows where. Howard Smith swore he got on the subway to Brooklyn – and slept while it carried him back and forth between Manhattan and Brooklyn … until it was time to go back to work at Famous in the morning.

Tony was always singing while at work (I have a cartoon one of the guys drew with Tony belting out "Chicago.") Artie Calpini was an accomplished musician and thought Tony had a good voice, so one lunchtime he and Tony rented time in a Manhattan sound studio to have Tony record a couple of tunes. Thing is, Tony was so uptight about the enterprise he choked on a song – I believe it was "Embraceable You" – and it was a musical disaster. So they did it again. And then he did one other song [I have the record here, somewhere.] Tony didn't mind so much because for him the highlight of the occasion was when Lena Horne entered the recording studio, dropped into the seat next to Tony and threw open her fur coat – which flapped onto Tony. The lunch hour was now a roaring success as far as Tony was concerned.

But somehow when then they got back to the studio things took a turn. Famous had a woman who was a kind of receptionist. She sat behind a window which opened on the small lobby to greet folks who exited the elevators. Was her name maybe Irene? Irene also had the job of Famous' disc jockey, choosing music to be played over the company loudspeaker. Somehow ?? Irene got hold of the records Tony made and began playing them ….. endlessly …… until Tony told her he was going to climb through her window to retrieve them if she didn't hand them over. And that was the end of Tony's short-lived musical career.

When I started at Famous in 1953 Sal Faillace was just promoted to inbetweener. Neither of us were there for much longer, Sal leaving for Tempo and me for Culhane's. Sal grew up in Mamaroneck where his dad was Chief of the little Mamaroneck police force – not to be confused with the force dealing with the township of Mamaroneck. I remember some nice BBQ's Sal's Mom and Dad prepared and eating in their backyard in Mamaroneck under their large grape vine. But we were not there when barbequing caused a crisis for Sal. He caught his chest on fire trying to add an accelerant to the BBQ and wound up in Portchester Hospital. That generated a slew of cartoons from his fellow animators. There was a very popular tune at that

time called “Mule Train.” It had shot to the top of the charts, likely making the singer wealthy. The guys decided Sal looked exactly like the singer of that song – Tennessee Ernie Ford – so they had cartoons suggesting the singer was in the same hospital as Sal and was in need of an enema, but the nurse was insisting on giving it to Sal, so sure was she he was Tennessee Ernie.

We also joked about maybe squeezing Sal’s neck to see if we could get some hit music from him so he would be wealthy too. It was a difficult time in animation, with lots of changes brewing. Around this same time another friend of Tony’s – George Singer – left for a job in Italy – MIlan – I think. But George was Jewish and he felt the Italians were not too thrilled to have him there – but that could have been George’s imagination. George and Tony were both yet single then and used to vacation together at the Catskill’s resorts. Years later, when the still-bachelor George moved to an apartment in Forest Hills – Tony and I went to help him set-up – but he was doing fine. Wherever there was a nail left in the walls he hung a picture – and he was done decorating. It was not very much later that Sal Faillace left NY for Mexico and the studio producing Bullwinkle. He stayed in Mexico for quite a few years.

Sal Faillace

Sal Faillace & Tony Creazzo

When Sal finally returned from Mexico for good he and his girlfriend at the time – Yolan and the Phil Kimmelman’s and Tony and I, would hang out and even go bowling together. Sal had one brother – Tommy, who had won a scholarship to play football at a PA college. Sal was so proud of him. Sal himself never got to do competitive sports because he had a rheumatic heart as a kid …. but he did play golf – and was good at that. Bill Hudson and his buddy Ben Farish, who also worked with him at Transfilm, were devoted golfing buddies with Tony and Dwayne Crowther … 6+9+making for a formidable four man quick-draw team. Vinnie Bell also grew up in Mamaroneck so he was often part of the crowd.

Vinnie played golf, but his main interest was music and he sang with the Westchester Chorale. Tony Creazzo considered Sal to be a top notch animator and spent many years animating with Sal in Sal’s Basement. Sal was then married to a quite beautiful woman and I remember one year when his wife wanted a coffee table that cost – in those days! – $500. Sal had brought a lot of furniture back from Mexico and would not agree to that …. so his wife bought it and gave it to Sal as a Christmas present!

Bill Pattengil was quite envied by guys who golfed, since his house backed up to a major golf course In Westchester County. I remember Bill working for Jack Zander at Pelican when the

studio shared a floor with Neil and Marge Sessa's Inking Service. I know little of Neil and Marge, except that I freelanced for then a good bit. They then were located in the Diamond District – 47th between 5th and 6thI believe. A floor over the stores that they shared, I think, with Jack Zander when his partner/finance man was Joe Dunford from Connecticut. {Joe owned the most beautiful old colonial homestead there, for which I lusted each time I saw its picture on his Christmas cards.)

Neil and Marge were delightful to work for. I remember one week when they announced we would be inking a commercial with brush rather than the usual crow quill pen. Someone had realized the "hairline" that was necessary for the expansion of the large movie screen, was not always needed for TV screens. I was surprised to find it was no problem at all. Guess the same skill works regardless the tool. I recall that designer Tom Knitch once said he forgot his gear on a weekend stay at Fire Island and did some ink work with wooden matchsticks!

I knew Bill Pattengil from Famous. He spent most of his career at that studio and was there when it closed as Paramount Cartoons in 1967. Another character I met at Famous was Pat Ward – who was later Vicki Alchurch. Born as Pat Ward, that name gained infamy in the 1953 headlines after the NYPD busted a call girl group. So she became Vicki Ward, then married a guy named Alchurch.

I freelanced at Shamus Culhane's studio for several weeks before I was invited to join the staff and left Famous. Shamus was always very nice to me, as was his wife Maxine Marx (yes, daughter of one of the Marx Brothers). He was inclined to be a bit grumpy in the mornings but would see his therapist at lunchtime and return as Sally Sunshine. He was really tough on the animators at our studio-wide production meetings and never hesitant to embarrass or torment the animators working for him.

When I was on staff there the crew included a guy in the office with the imposing name of Cecil Brathwaite, perhaps doing financial things? Culhane had the talented and versatile Chris Ishii doing designing and backgrounds. Joan Sarasino was head of Ink & Paint, with Sal Buttafuoco on her crew, and Barbara Green, who named her twin sons Martin & Lewis. Heading animation was Rod Johnson, who supervised Jack Dazzo, Harvey Siegel, and Bob Ebeling. Also on staff then was Alex Roy from Haiti.

Rod Johnson had previously been an officer at Signal Corps during the war years. [Frank Napoleon. who was there with him at Signal Corps said – perhaps jokingly – that it being a government operation the guys had to turn in a pencil stub in order to get a new pencil.]

There was a woman at Culhane's shop – then in her thirties – Ruth Gench – who, tragically, had a stroke, despite her young age. But the good news is she was able to return to work – I think the following year, after I had left.

Tony, my future husband, came in nights to freelance. I stayed most nights myself to earn some overtime. I had begun dating Tony and there were days when he traveled home to the Bronx to eat, collected his car, and returned to Manhattan to bring me some food and drive me home. There was a lot of work in the house including a series of commercials called “Scrubbing Bubbles” for Ajax Cleanser – a major production problem arose when Shamus was not happy with the brightness of the sparkles. We worked to thicken the white opaque on the cels, while still having the sparkles come to a point .

Production meetings were on Friday mornings. Rarely a problem for us in Ink & Paint, but sometimes difficult sessions for the animation staff. There was a series of commercials for canned fruit – Del Monte I think – Shamus was unhappy because he thought the the guys were giving the singing peaches crossed-eyes!

I tried finding these two commercial series on YouTube with no success. Surprisingly, it seems some years later Dow Co. changed their cleanser name to “scrubbing bubbles.” Had the same problem searching a series of commercials made at Transfilm for Betty Crocker cake mixes – each commercial representing a different flavor as I recall, but found only some dull live-action stuff.

I was always happy working for Culhane, but was also very tired, since I was putting in a lot of hours. I laugh now to remember what happens if you are working too much, for too long – and working at a nicely slanted drawing board with the lullaby of an animation disk turning rhythmically, if you are an inker using an old style crow quill pen. As you nod off you draw a nice long ink line across the cel mounted on your peg bar. Which then makes you pop awake! …. and then slowly scratch back the offending pen line with the other end of your point holder – which you have carved with an x-acto blade for that purpose …. scratching slowly and carefully. Then you start inking again …. and give way almost immediately into the arms of Morpheus once again ….. only to snap awake and begin the scratching once again. Only black coffee breaks this spell.

I remember one night when Tony was at a drawing board in the room I worked in. I had just bought the first book of Hank Ketcham’s “Dennis the Menace” cartoons and brought it to Tony’s work station. Well, he began to laugh, turn a page …. and laugh, and then LAUGH & LAUGH – ’til everyone in the room was laughing at him! Of course, later I found he did the same thing in movie theaters. There was no controlling him – or his sense of humor.

Our younger son, Tom, seems to have inherited that trait, and quite likes animated cartoons, his favorite being Claghorn the Colonel of rooster fame. At the risk of being accused of bias – or worse – of bragging, I have to preface this next story by pointing out that Tony Creazzo was an exceptionally good assistant animator — and speedy to boot, often very much sought after by

studios and animators. Tony was on staff at UPA when Sutherlands opened their TV commercial producing studio in NY, and he went to do some freelancing for Sutherland's in the evenings. Not surprisingly, Sutherlands offered him more money to come aboard full-time. So Tony went to tell Gene Deitch, who was then heading up UPA's east coast operation. Gene Deitch offered Tony yet more money to stay at UPA. So Tony – never one to be abashed, went back to report to Sutherland that he would not be joining them. Then Sutherland offered Tony even more than Gene Deitch had offered. So Tony went back to report to Deitch. This was repeated several times more. As I said Tony did not embarrass easily. But then the other assistant animators, among them I recall John Svocak, went to Gene and essentially said something along the lines of "why all this money for Creazzo – what are the rest of us – chopped liver?" So Gene Deitch then offered raises all around. This inspired the talented artist Fred Crippen to make a lovely cartoon of Tony Creazzo as a statue in Central Park. But either for reality – or to keep Tony humble – the statue was surround liberally with pigeons and their consequences.

I interviewed with George Ottino for the job of inker at Transfilm. I was about 19 then and bravely announce I would not work for less than $100 a week !!! He smiled and repeated: "you won't work …?" But he hired me anyhow. The Ink and Paint room was at the back of the floor – it had two large windows filling one wall. I think Sal Buttafuoco was already inking there. I had worked with him at Culhane's place.

The head of Ink and Paint was Jackie Blair – a nice – and personable woman from the Midwest somewhere, and a gifted artist. But there were two full animation documentaries in the house that had been animated but needed pre-camera checking, and a series of unfinished Betty Crocker minute-long spots. Jackie seemed unable to keep up or possibly was not familiar with checking. I think the NYC pace was a bit much for her, she moved slowly and spoke softly.

George Ottino was getting frustrated and called a production meeting to ask if any of us could do the checking. I volunteered and they built me a work station against a wall in the hall to begin. George came to me to ask if I could also handle the supervision of Ink and Paint so he would not need another hire. I agreed. In her defense I should note that Jackie had a long commute from a rural part of Connecticut, where she had a husband and several very young children. I remember one winter day when she told me the pipes in her house had frozen and she had to take a bucket to a nearby creek where she broke the ice to fill her pail with water! – before starting for work! I think it was all too much for her. But the work had to be done.

Lou Kachivas was animating at Transfilm when I began there. He was an interesting personality, sporting semi-transparent Hawaiin-Style shirts without benefit of undershirts, a different one almost every day. A bachelor living in Queens – Jackson Heights – I think – he swore he just threw these shirts under his bed each night and then when the mattress started rising up he would take the whole batch to be laundered. Lou was inclined to arrive late each

day and George Ottino's new secretary – fresh from a bank-type setting, wanted to get after him about it. I thought that was not a good idea, because Lou was very fast, so once at work he turned out at least his fair share.

Always entertaining, Lou would invariably return from lunch hour announcing to all, "I'm in love!!" – the object of his affection some girl who had walked by him on 5th Ave. – and on occasion he would march into the Ink & Paint room and loudly proclaim "Kiss me 'til my eyeballs bleed!!" One day Lou asked me to make a drawing of a young female head with impressive looking hair for a shampoo ad he was doing. I did but then never heard another word about it. Not sure where Lou had come from, but I suspect it was Terrytoons. I never saw him after that time at Transfilm but I gather he had a rather illustrious career, I think on the west coast and for a while with Bakshi.

There was an inker at Transfilm that I don't recall hiring so she must have gotten there just as I was becoming head of Ink & Paint. Not a kid, an older person … but then I was barely 19 so maybe she was in her 30s!! She told me she was divorced from Byron "Bunny" Rabbitt– and her name was Ruth Lamb. What are the odds? Another inker – Frank Bucaria – joined the team.

Ken Bowen was a special kind of guy – and an accomplished comp artist at Transfilm. In those pre-computer days Ken's job was the meticulous reproduction of product packaging – especially logos and lettering. On things like a pack of Chesterfield cigarettes it took some doing. For a while Ken Bowen sat in the inking room. At that time Ken was obsessed with the music from the Broadway show Kismet, and had a record of the score which he played on a portable phonograph that sat on the windowsill. Each time the record ended Ken would stand, walk slowly and quietly to the windows, and start it at the beginning again. That made Ruth Lamb jump from her seat sobbing and run from the room. I followed to coax her back. That may or may not be the reason Ken switched to a desk in the animation room.

After a stint in the ink room Ken moved into the animators' room, where he worked on large cels – like 20 field cels. [Regular animators were working almost entirely on 12-field paper – except for panning animation.] This was so the illustrations could be reduced to appear even more accurate. Ken's job required a steady hand, patience and great attention to detail. But that is exactly what he was capable of. Everything about Ken was neat. The lunch he brought in was wrapped in brown paper that had perfect folds and miters, looking like it had been wrapped by machine. I think Ken was descended from a line of native New Yorkers in the New Rochelle area and I believe his dad was a Pastor – or Minister – in a large New Rochelle Church.

And Ken was a classy guy. Pleasant, soft spoken and easy to get along with. Which made it all the harder to bear when he related how he went to freelance for Bunny Rabbit – who had set

up in a hotel. Ken, being a black guy, was asked to use the service entrance at the back of the building.

I had freelanced there too without doing that. But this was the early 1950s Tony and Ken golfed together – it was one of his serious interests – and because Tony had a friend who worked at the Westchester Golf Course he was able to get tickets and Ken would come with us to attend the big tournaments there. Ken was married, but on the times he visited us in Yorktown his wife was not with him – probably because the guys were going golfing somewhere so I never met her.

On another musical note, one of the guys who had served in the military in the Korean War, and then been sent to Japan before being discharged, brought in some Japanese vocals. I found them quite appealing – even without knowing the language. I can still hum a pretty one that sounded to me like the female was singing "I Ain't Got No Yoyo". Nice.

Also on that windowsill was a coffee carafe that had not been washed in months. No one would agree to it being their turn to wash it – and no one was going to wash it if it was not their turn.

At that time – about 1955 – Transfilm was a vital and vibrant studio with lots of work in the house and a gifted team to turn the stuff out. The animation group occupied a floor, which included, besides Ink and Paint, a room of animators, including Bill Hudson, Ben Farish, Lou Kachivas, and a guy named Keith Robinson who was commuting from Philadelphia. Several smaller rooms housed designers Paul Kim and Al Kozel, and Tom Knitch who may also have been doing backgrounds. There was a camera stand in another room, manned by the brilliant Eli Levitan. The live action group occupied another floor – as did the various suits and bosses.

John Cuddy also sat in there. He was married to one of the Calpini daughters and therefore brother-in-law to both Orrie and Artie Calpini. I never met Orrie – the Calpinis were a bit before my time, but Artie Calpini – [Artie for Artemus] was a good friend of Tony's from the early days of Famous in NY – before I started there. And they had a sister or two in the business as well. There were, I was told, ten Calpini siblings. Their Dad was Italian and their Mom Mexican and they all had these marvelous Greek-inspired names. A sad note though, was that two of the sons had been killed in WWll.

Artie returned to NY with the Fleischer/Famous crew, but had met a girl while in Florida and eventually married her, so moved back there. But when we lived in Bayside on Long Island there would be a knock on our door – usually at night and in the dead of winter. It would be Artie claiming he heard we were expecting a storm and he needed a snow fix! He would claim he hated Florida because it was so flat… and he said if ever the country needed an enema it

would be inserted in Florida. I believe Artie was an animator even while still at Fleischer in Florida.

John Cuddy did technical animation – mostly geometrics, no characters. Seems also to have always been a guy in there either at a desk or visiting from another floor; an optical guy, I think, and I remember his name as Mike Emanuel, but don't hold me to that. John lived here in Westchester County. We knew the Cuddys well and visited them in Rye, when John took Tony and I out in his boat on Long Island Sound. Had to be around 1960 because we had our two toddler boys with us. The sound was choppy and I felt a bit ill but solved that by going into the water with my older son. He was about 2 or 3 — and I suspect half-fish.

Also in the animator's room at Transfilm was illustrator extraordinaire Cliff Roberts. Personable, and friendly, and also willing to give good back rubs to those whose back muscles he considered "too tight" – me among them. He sent the most wonderful Christmas cards. One I loved was done on a very long piece of art stock – maybe 8 – 10 inches in height and several feet long. It was accordion folded and showed a colorful centipede-type critter and the text merely said "Humbug." Another of his cards was made on banker envelopes, the little cash ones with a vertical orientation. Cliff turned the ever lope into a sooty chimney and added an equally sooty Santa which could be pulled from the top.

Transfilm got extremely busy at that time and, in addition to the two full-animation documentaries the house also had a series of Betty Crocker cake mixes minute spots, and a fuel company's [Was it Texaco?] spots that featured a dinosaur (*No. It was Sinclair) . I recall a lesson we learned with the cake mix spots. They cut from animation to live shots of the cakes with a wedge cut out. The cakes looked like leaden when done with still photography and so live film had to be used which made the cakes look tender instead of like rock. Something to do with the lighting on the cake crumbs I think. In the back of the animator's room was a small room where a guy named Yourll Chandler could be found. A young black guy, likely not yet out of his teens. He did odd jobs and ran errands. He also took on the job of making breakfast for all of us. I did not eat at home and usually made a beeline for Yourll's room to get a coffee fix first thing in the morning. I was often first into the studio and one morning I found Yourll looking rather odd and asked what the problem was. He began to cry … I am going to cry now … it seems he had just read the awful news of the young boy Emmet Till from Chicago being killed down south.

One noteworthy day we were told Tyrone Power was in the building to do some live stuff…. but I was too busy to go look. There was also a room with George Ottino, his secretary named Rosemary, fresh from a bank job, and whose father was a voice on Radio America since WW2, Eli Levitan's twin nephews were being trained as cameramen by Eli when I was at Transfilm – and thereby hangs a tale. I, by this time was head of I&P, but also checking two hour long full

animation in house documentaries. One for Kellog's, not the cereal company, but rather something like an oil refinery film designed and animated by Paul Kim. It was all massive tanks and things unrecognizable by ordinary humans, and Paul was cleverly showing the activity inside the tanks with colored gels like those used by lighting guys in theaters. The other film was for Continental Can and that was being designed in medieval-styled characters by Tom Knitch.

I was trying to spend a good bit of time with Eli, to become more familiar with the camera stand, but one day when his two nephews were there he – rather rudely I thought – asked me to leave his room. Prissy that I was then, I was miffed and would not talk to him for a long time. Later I discovered he thought I was distracting the two nephews who were about the same age as me. He tried often to make it up to me. If I happened to get into the elevator when he was already in it he would sing-song "Shoil, the goil who's a poil, with a coil". [I wore my hair in those days tied up on my head in curls – lol.] But Eli Levitan – camera man extraordinaire and all round animation guru was a very nice, and quite brilliant guy. Really a terrific guy. One time he drove all the way to our home in Bayside at night to teach my husband how to make an iris wipe. That, however did not stop him from the teasing or tormenting of his fellow workers – mostly other guys – were always glad to visit upon their fellow artists – a run for their money.

Though one incident I recall was Eli's own fault ….. well, except for all the rude chuckles everyone in one Famous group had at his expense. We had been summoned to a pencil test in the next building. [of course studio veterans were likely to scare any new hires by telling them to "grab some pencils! – we are going for a pencil test!"]. So we all clanked across the metal bridge at the back of the building to the projection room in the next building where Eli had already set up for the viewing. But what came up on the screen was baffling.[I should explain here that Eli had extremely poor vision and wore some serious eyeglasses.] The room grew quiet as the attendees tried to puzzle out what they were seeing on the big screen. Then the tittering began – and grew – as the audience realized Eli had leaned in close under his camera to correct something or remove a fleck – and what we were seeing was several feet of… the back of Eli's head! (I have to admit I am laughing now.)

And then there was the time when Eli's vision caused him some more grief. He was in the Ink & Paint dept at Transfilm, where those large windows mostly overlooked the roofs of nearby buildings. Two young inkers – Sal Buttafuoco and Frank Bucaria – were at the windows …. and they invited Eli to see the naked woman who was sunbathing on a nearby rooftop. Eli spent a good bit of energy inquiring "Where? Where?" before realizing his vision had sold him out again.

There were freelancers appearing every night. Duane Crowther, fresh from the west coast and his animation studies at a college there. One night Duane made some derogatory remarks

about Famous Studios animators. He seemed not to distinguish between those choosing the stories and styles, and the guys at the drawing boards. To the good Duane's credit, one time after Tony Creazzo came in from Famous to freelance, Duane came to me to say he took it back. Said Tony could "really draw!!!"

Ink and paint also had night traffic. Vinny Bell back from service in Korea came to ink. Vinny was always popular with the ladies and years later, when we all became close friends, he admitted being miffed at my not being very impressed with him. [I was too busy and too tired. I suspect. to pay him much attention."

An interesting freelancer was Freddy Eng. He was known for being a speedy inker and I gave him a huge scene with that fuel company's dinosaur running around and into the distance and back. I was dismayed the next morning to see he had added the amount of time it took him to do each cel at the bottom of the cel with his pen. ??? I reminded him he might have done a few more cels if he would stop adding his times to the job.

Freddy had at least one sister working in animation – and rumor had it some relatives at home also contributing. One time when Tony and I made our annual trek to the Greenwich Village street Art Show, this time with two baby boys in strollers, we spotted a crowd gathered and worked our way through to see what was getting such attention – and there was Freddy Eng's sister, sitting on the sidewalk alongside a beautifully ornate brass cash register …. and drawing people's pets from photos they brought to her. Had to admire her enterprise.

Tony made his way to Jack Zander's Pelican Films. Armin Shaffer, a great guy and terrific artist, was also impressively good- looking, and was approached by the ad agency guys to be featured as a Marlboro Man in their campaign for Marlboro Cigarettes which featured guys in 10 gallon hats. He paid a severe price for his new found fame as his fellow workers: Tony Creazzo, John Ploydart and Jim Logan, drew endless cartoons of his elevated status as star, and he drew cartoons of his sufferings. He was Tony Creazzo's roommate at Pelican and he and his wife so generously offered me their place on Fire Island to recuperate after a stay in the hospital.

I don't recall seeing Abe LIss very often at Transfilm, but I considered him to be one of the "suits." So I admit I was a bit surprised, quite nicely surprised, when about a year later he and Sam Magdoff opened Elektra and asked me to be their production manager. I agreed. The big job in the house was a scrolling animation which, along with a music score, would serve as an introduction to the popular TV show *THE LUCKY STRIKE HIT PARADE*.

This was my first job which involved dealing with the buck-shoed and

Chino-pants wearing troops from the big Madison Avenue agencies. They seemed to think they were not working if they did not find some errors while checking the progress of art for film. Movieolas were used then, especially in studios that had no projection capability. Our banner showed scrolling bars of music wafting by, with familiar items carried along: a phonograph, a traffic light, etc. Both the traffic light and the phonograph arm gave me trouble when it was pointed out that traffic lights – which only had two colors in those days always had one particular color on top. Not the one on our artwork. Similarly, I was informed that the arms of phonographs always were attached on just one side. Couldn't complain – they were right.

And I soon learned something else. Of course I had always know that my maternal grandfather was employed as a scenic artist for Broadway shows – and later on television, and had been tor many years when I lived with him as a child during the war. And I knew he was a union member. But now I discovered we were both in IATSE when It turned out he was painting any scenery needed by Lucky Strike's Hit Parade and painting the costume packs for the dancing cigarette pack & matchbook, while I was working on the lead-in for the same show. But my grandfather was in the Scenic Artist's Local and not 841 so I had not encountered him at any union meeting or in *Top Cel*.

As it turned out I was not at Elektra for very long – maybe 6 or 8 months – when I realized I was pregnant with my first baby. That may also be responsible for my memories of there being rather scant… guess I had other things on my mind. I left animation for child-rearing, I felt really bad about leaving Abe and Sam so soon – they were both so nice – but in those days mostly women who were destitute continued working when they had small children. And since my mom had always worked during the depression and WWll, I was determined to be at home with my little ones and Tony was happy with that.

It was while we were still living at the Yorktown house that Pelican Films, where Tony had been happily on staff for several years, declared bankruptcy. Those were hard times for animation in the 70s I believe, and a lot of the guys were concerned. I know that was a difficult spell for Tony, but he never seemed to worry, not wanting to worry the whole family, I suspect. And it was not very long before Vinny Caffarelli – to the delight of my car-crazy teen-aged sons, was tooling up our driveway in his Bentley!! – with a job for Tony. And then pretty much coasting from there. In later years Tony freelanced steadily – and often, just about non- stop – for many places including PBS but most often for Vinny Cafarelli's Stars 'n' Stripes, and for Phil Kimmelman's studio. He did a lot of work for Perpetual. Tony often worked in tandem with Al ChiarIto and Sal Faillace. In those days working from home. Actually Tony was ideally suited to being a freelancer. He never procrastinated and was up at 5am whenever necessary to get a job done on time. And, of course, when Jack re-opened on 5th Ave. as Zander's Animation Parlor,

Tony was one of the early re-hires. The start of a new prosperous spell. Theirs was surely a happy collaboration.

I returned to animation by working on Imperial Oil's animated documentary *THE GREAT CANADIAN ENERGY SAGA* in Toronto. I was in Canada for some 5 or 6 months in '73 or '74. I recall it was at the height of the Watergate Scandal. Both George and Dolores Cannata appeared at the Canadian Broadcasting Corp. when the animation unit there was making that documentary for Imperial Oil. Chris Ishii also showed up in Toronto. Interestingly, when Tony died and Top Cel only printed a small blurb, it was Jack Zander who berated that article and wrote Tony a glowing obituary himself.

Chris Ishii

I only discovered yesterday that Fleischer Studios in Florida had made a cartoon as part of the Betty Boop series of Betty with "the Little King" of 1930s newspaper comic strip fame … which I dutifully went to watch. And it reminded me of when Tony and I and kids had moved to Yorktown in upstate NY and he had a spare bedroom as his workroom. I had bought him a gift of two wall- hangings that I thought were appropriate for the space. One was of "the Little King" seated on his throne while a courtier rushes up to him excitedly yelling "**THE PEASANTS ARE REVOLTING!!***"* …… and the Little King replies "you can say that again." That seemed to suit Tony's sense of humor. And with Tony always battling deadlines I thought the second wall hanging was particularly appropriate. It showed two guys on an island in rather rustic garb and the line of copy said "Only Robinson Crusoe Would Expect to Have Everything done by Friday!"

I respect the dedication of everyone committed to this strange industry that flared like a fireworks display and then faded, leaving so many devotees longing for yet more.